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ABSTRACT

This edited work brings several generations of Professor David Tyack's students and colleagues together to explore the purpose and structure of schooling for the common good. For most of the last century, school reformers have attempted to employ schools to solve nearly every social ill. Reforms since the 1980s have, in the main, emphasized using schools to improve the economic performance of the country, often neglecting other objectives, and in ways that frequently aid those already privileged by race, class, or gender. Examples of these reforms include vouchers, charter schools, and privately run public schools. Despite relentless criticism by those fixated on economic competitiveness, support for the broader purpose of nurturing good citizens remains strong among the public. The first part of this work explores different ways of perceiving the "common good" in public education at key points of school reform over the last century, including the evolution of national educational agendas, the dilemma of indoctrination, education and Hispanics, and corporate management of troubled urban schools. The second part of this work examines the social and political implications of different ways of viewing the common good, including the need to pursue social justice, historic critiques of the role of bureaucracy in schoolings, and the ideological divide between progressives and conservatives regarding what constitutes good schools. The third part considers the relationship of tradition to modern democracies, tensions between community life and regulatory pressures, and the ways in which education has become a secular American religion. (Contains over 500 references.) (TEJ)

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